Good Afternoon:

As you are aware, over the past 48 hours, the Ambassador Bridge has been impacted by protestors in a manner similar to what has transpired on Parliament Hill.

The difference here is the significant impact on the busiest international border crossing in North America, and locally, our own economy in Windsor.

I want to spend a moment talking about what's at stake here before we turn it over to Windsor Police to provide a tactical update.

The local transportation & warehousing sector is made up of 2,600 businesses employing over 10,000 people in Windsor-Essex - 10,000 members of our own community. It is also an enabling sector that helps to move goods, people and services.

The Windsor-Detroit trade corridor is one of the busiest commercial border crossing in the world; it is estimated that more than $450 million in goods cross the Windsor–Detroit border every day, representing one-third of all surface trade between Canada and the USA;

More than 6500 people residing in the Windsor-Essex area work outside of Canada, nearly all of whom commute across the Windsor-Detroit border. This includes health care workers that have spent the past two years saving lives on the frontlines of this pandemic, on both sides of the Detroit River;

Windsor-Essex boasts an industry profile of more than 1000 manufacturers, $4.5 billion of manufactured goods produced in annual GDP – 30% of the region's total GDP production, 90-plus auto and parts manufacturers and an excess of 250 machine, tool, die and mold companies which are all key components of the integrated global value chain;

Windsor-Essex is home to the largest auto cluster in North America. Vehicle parts cross the border an average of seven times before finished vehicles roll off the lines; and

70-80% of Ontario's greenhouse produce is exported to the United States. There are over 3,200 acres of vegetable greenhouses in Ontario with approximately 2,600 acres (or 80%) in Windsor-Essex. Ontario agriculture exports to the U.S in 2016, totaled $683.5 million.

Every hour this protest continues, our community hurts. Thousands of workers feed their families because of the commerce made possible by the Ambassador Bridge. Hundreds of local auto parts companies stay in business because of the movement of goods across the Ambassador Bridge. Our grocery stores are stocked with food because of the transport of food across the border.

I am very concerned about the lasting and permanent impact it will have on the region's economic competitiveness.

Businesses require certainty of movement with many operating on a "just in time" delivery model.

IF Canada becomes known as a difficult jurisdiction to do business with – to move goods in and out, for example – then supply chains will evolve and reconfigure to remove this element of risk and avoid Windsor-Essex.

These are issues that need to be considered as we seek to address the present situation.

Closer to home, I'm concerned about the health and safety of Windsor residents.

To date, these demonstrations have been by and large peaceful and without incident.

I want to commend the Windsor Police for all they have done to de-escalate where required and maintain security on site.

In the past 24 hours we have spoken with officials at both the Provincial and Federal Governments; and yesterday evening formally requested additional resources from the federal government. While we are hopeful this situation can be resolved in the near term, we need to plan for a protracted protest and have requested 100 additional personnel to be deployed to Windsor to support our hard working local Police Service.

We are striving to resolve this issue safely and peacefully.

My office has already received numerous complaints and calls from local residents and business owners advocating for the demonstrators to be forcibly removed. While temporarily gratifying for some people to see the forced removal of the demonstrators, such action may enflame the situation further and risk conflict. It is important to remember that we cannot ask our police services to risk the safety of all involved. Even in these circumstances, police services must consider the consequences of all of their actions and ensure that the safety of the public, including protestors, are not put at risk. Police actions must be calculated and appropriately balanced.

At this time, our focus is on maintaining security and de-escalating this situation as much as possible.

But make no mistake, our community will not tolerate this level of disruption for long.

In a democracy, everyone has the right to peaceful protest. It's part of what makes Canada great.

But the economic and social harm that these protests are having here in Windsor, in Ottawa and across Canada is quite significant.

The resolution to this will require a "whole of Government" approach. With Leadership required from Ottawa and Queen's Park to bring down the temperature and resolve these protests peacefully.

I want you to know that I will do all I can to safeguard the safety, security and livelihood of Windsor residents. We need continued partnership with federal and provincial government and no jurisdictional finger-pointing.

At this time, I would like to call on Windsor Police to provide us with a tactical update, before we take your questions.